

JOHANN SPRINGER'S ERBEN: A SHORT HISTORY OF A HISTORIC GUNMAKER

By Marc Gorelick

Johann Springer's Erben was one of the most prestigious European gunmakers during the 19th and early 20th centuries. During its more than 190 years of existence it has produced over 10,600 custom rifles and shotguns. Today it is also one of Europe's premier auction house and hunting and sporting arms retailers.



Figure 1: Joh. Springer's Erben business card.

The history of Johann Springer's Erben actually starts in the 1830's when the gunsmith Mathias Nowotny, originally from Lietmaritz in Bohemia, moved to Vienna, Austria from Königgrätz. In 1836 Nowotny was granted permission to operate as a gunsmith. He established a workshop in Josefstadt (now the 8th District) and quickly became successful, making and selling high quality firearms. He soon was able to open a second location (probably a retail outlet) at Stock-im-Eisen-Platz 5, in the 1st district near St. Stephen Cathedral.



*Figures 2 & 3. Mathias Nowotny double barrel 16gauge percussion shotgun. It has 28 inch long Damascus barrels and engraved lockplates and is representative of his work.
Photos courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben.*

Johann Springer, who was a master engraver, moved from Leutschach in Upper Hungary to Vienna in the late 1830s. After he arrived in Vienna he also learned gunsmithing in addition to his engraving skills. He knew and worked for Nowotny for some fifteen years, establishing a strong relationship with Nowotny's family. Nowotny committed suicide in 1856 and in 1857 Nowotny's widow sold the entire business to Springer. Also in that year, Springer married Nowotny's sister Katharina, cementing his ownership of the Nowotny business.

NOTE: Two of Mathias Nowotny's apprentices later rose to prominence as gunmakers. One was Ferdinand Fruwirth who founded his own gunmaking business in Vienna, becoming a leading contractor to the Imperial Army, as well as making quality guns for the elite trade. The other apprentice was Mathias Nowotny's nephew, Johann Nowotny, who founded his own company in Prague. Nowotny in Prague is considered to have been one of the best gunmakers of his time in the Habsburg Empire, owning many patents, and winning numerous awards at international exhibitions. His guns were bought by the royalty of Austria-Hungary, Russia, the Netherlands, Montenegro, Serbia and Italy. **END NOTE.**

Springer wasted no time in changing the company name to "**Johann Springer, vorm. Mathias Nowotny**" (Johann Springer formerly Mathias Nowotny) to honor the original founder while establishing his own ownership. He was granted permission to continue to produce sporting arms and spent the next two decades concentrating on making some of the finest grade sporting firearms in the world. His products exemplified the highest standards of quality and reliability. Furthermore, his skills as an engraver stood him in good stead and many of his custom guns were veritable works of art.



Fig. 4. Emperor Franz Josef I during a hunt.

Springer specialized in the production of luxury hunting rifles and the superiority of his craftsmanship helped him win several noteworthy medals at national and international exhibitions. He soon developed a clientele that numbered among the elite of European nobility and royalty, including the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef I (Figure 4). The Emperor, an avid hunter and lover of fine hunting firearms, became one of Springer's regular customers and in 1872 awarded Springer the highest honor as Purveyor to the Imperial Court and Chamber, or "k.u.k. Kammertitel", which is a higher award than the "Hoflieferantentitel" or court supplier. Among the fine guns that he made for Emperor Franz Josef was a luxurious percussion double rifle (Figures 5 to 12) that was manufactured as part of a stand of nearly identical sporting arms during 1860s when he was still using the company name of **Johann Springer, vorm. Mathias Nowotny.**

NOTE: Franz Josef I (b. August 18, 1830 – d. November 21, 1916) was Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, and the ruler of other Habsburg monarchy states from December 2 1848 until his death on November 21, 1916. The emperor was a passionate hunter who especially loved hunting in the Alpine Mountains. Hunting was his chief form of recreation and it was both a personal passion and a political tool. It allowed him to relax away from official duties while also meeting with other European leaders, such as Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and the Russian Crown Prince. Reportedly, during his lifetime of hunting he took about 55,000 game animals. It was recorded that 48,345 were various species of deer, ibex, chamois and other large game. He had a large personal collection of hunting rifles and shotguns and some of his extensive personal armory, including guns made by Springer, can be seen in the Kunsthistorische Museum of Vienna. **END NOTE**



Fig. 5. Springer double rifle for Emperor Franz Josef I. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.



Fig. 6. Springer double rifle for Emperor Franz Josef I. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.

The 10 bore (.78") side by side rifle is numbered "6" of the stand in gold on the breech and on the tang. The tang also has the gold inlaid crowned "FJ" monogram of Emperor Franz Joseph I. The 28 ½ inch long barrels are very finely etched Damascus with fine straight line rifling and a single bead front sight.

As befits an emperor's personal gun, the bright metal of the rifle is extensively embellished with superb engraving. Intertwined gold bands are inlaid before the sculpted breeches which have rosette plugs and a low relief engraved snipe between the hammers. The hammers are engraved with the face of a bearded man and with shaded foliate scroll that matches the foliate engraving on the rest of the gun. The stepped, bar-in-wood side locks are covered with foliate scroll engraving, as well as whimsical hermit face motifs at the front of each side plate (Figures 7 & 8). The right side lock plate is engraved with the name "**SPRINGER**" below the hammer (Figure 9) and the left side lock plate has "**IN WIEN**" engraved in the same position (Figure 10). The barrel rib is signed in inlaid gold "**JOH SPRINGER VORM. NOWOTNY IN WIEN**" (Figures 11 & 12).



Fig. 7. Springer double rifle for Emperor Franz Josef I. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.



Fig. 8. Springer double rifle for Emperor Franz Josef I. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.

Both locks are fitted with hammer block safeties. The trigger guard, which has a figural horn extension, is decorated with an engraved hunting dog and rabbit scene on the trigger guard, which has a carved horn extension. The mounts are engraved steel and the steel butt plate is engraved with a tiger head. The rifle has its original German silver tipped ramrod and its horn buttons that retained a leather sling.



Fig. 9. Right side lock plate. Note name **SPRINGER**, details of shadowed foliate engraving and hammer block safety. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.



Fig. 10. Left side lock plate. Note words **IN WIEN**, shadowed foliate engraving and hammer block safety. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.



Fig. 11. Note maker's signature, **JOH SPRINGER VORM. NOWOTNY IN WIEN**, inlaid in gold on the top rib, the gold number **6** in the tang and the crowned **JF** monogram. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.

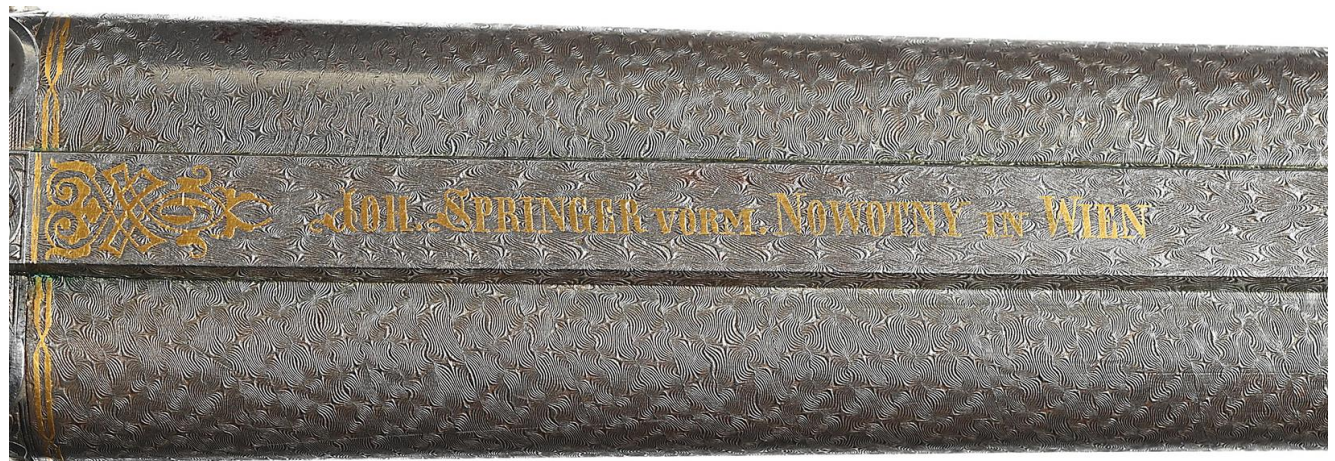


Fig. 12. Close up of inlaid gold **JOH SPRINGER VORM. NOWOTNY IN WIEN**, the finely etched faux Damascus barrels & the intertwined inlaid gold bands on the left. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions.

Another fine weapon displaying both Springer's and Nowotny's names is a Lefauchaux pinfire type double rifle made for Henri d'Artois, Count of Chambord (1820-1883) son of the French Duke of Berry. He likely acquired this break action gun when he was living in exile in the castle of Frohsdorf, south-east of Vienna. The 40.6 inch long, side by side rifle is ornately engraved, has back action lock plates and a lever under the forearm for opening the Lefauchaux action. It is on display in the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature (Museum of Hunting and Nature) in Paris, France.

After a while Springer had established a reputation in his own name for producing some of the finest weapons in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and one can surmise that he was comfortable and confident enough that he generally dropped his late employer and brother-in-law's name from the company title. The firm, now known as **Johann Springer** or **Joh. Springer**, continued to produce high grade decorated firearms. A Johan Springer double 16 gauge shotgun made about 1865 with a Lefauchaux pinfire action is illustrated below (Figure 13). The gun has the maker's name inlaid in gold on the rib above the fine Damascus barrels, and is decorated with engravings of game scenes surrounded by vine leaves (Figure 14).



Fig. 13. Johann Springer pinfire shotgun. Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria



Fig. 14. Johann Springer pinfire shotgun. Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria

Figures 15-21 illustrate a percussion 12 gauge side by side shotgun that exemplifies the engraving that often embellished the firearms produced under Springer's sole name. Made around 1860, it is 44.5 inches long with 28.75 inch long Damascus barrels. The straight rib above the barrels has the maker's name "**JOH. SPRINGER IN WIEN**" inlaid in gold (Figure 17). The forearm is permanently attached with a lever for disassembling the shotgun. The back action locks, "fire shields", trigger guard, lever under the forearms and other metal parts are engraved over their entire surface. The lock plates and bascule have engraved animal scenes surrounded by shaded oak leaves – a fox hunting birds on the left lock plate and pheasants on the left side of the bascule (Figure 18), and a hound pointing on the right lock plate and quail on the right side of the bascule (Figure 19).



Fig. 15 & 16. Joh. Springer shotgun. Photo courtesy of Joh. Springers Erben, Vienna, Austria.

The shotgun's graceful "S" shaped hammers are engraved with oak leaves and the underlever has an engraved capercaillie surrounded by a fancy inlaid gold border. On the upper side, between the hammers is an engraving of a fox surrounded by a border of inlaid gold. There is gold inlay decoration on the breech end of the barrels and the upper tang (Figure 20). . The trigger guard has an engraved scene of snipe surrounded by an inlaid gold border of leaves and tendrils (Figure 21). There is a carved horn finger rest/grip behind the double triggers and the walnut stock has fine checkering (Figures 18 & 19).



Fig. 17. Top of the shotgun. Note the inlaid gold maker's name JOH. SPRINGER IN WIEN and decoration. Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria.



Fig. 18. Left side of shotgun. Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria.



Fig. 19. Right side of shotgun. Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria.



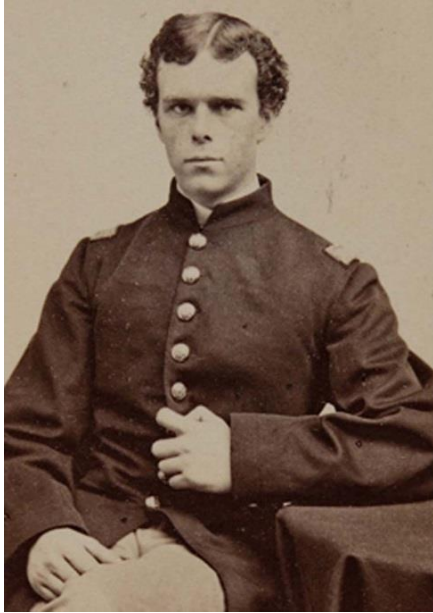
Fig. 20. Top of shotgun decorated with engraved fox and oak leaves and inlaid gold lines and borders. Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria.



Fig. 21. Bottom of shotgun decorated with engraved scenes of capercaillie on the under lever and snipe on the trigger guard surrounded by oak leaves and inlaid gold lines and borders. Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria.

At least one Joh. Springer shotgun has a fascinating American history. It is a historically important firearm with iron clad identification that is both of superb quality and is in fantastic condition. This Springer shotgun, pictured below (Figures 23 to 30), made its way to America where, during the Civil War, it was captured by Union forces during General Ambrose Burnside's North Carolina expedition (February to June 1862). Either during or soon after the Battle of Roanoke Island (Feb. 7-8, 1862) it came into the possession of Lieutenant Daniel T. Sargent, Company E, 24th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment. This magnificent example of Springer's work, possibly taken from a wealthy Southern plantation owner or merchant, has been handed down in the Sargent family from one generation to the next until recently.

Daniel T. Sargent (Figure 22) was probably born in 1841 (there are conflicting records) into a wealthy Boston family that could trace its lineage back to the early days of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. His father, Henry J. Sargent, was an extremely wealthy attorney and the family lived in a ritzy part of the city. In September 1861 Daniel joined the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and on December 6, 1861 he was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in Company E of the 24th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, part of Foster's Brigade in Ambrose Burnside's Expeditionary Corps, which was destined for the North



Carolina coast. The regiment, and Sargent, saw frequent and hard fighting during the war. The 24th received its baptism of fire at the Battle of Roanoke Island on February 8, 1862. It subsequently fought at the Battle of New Berne (March 11-13, 1862) and during the summer of 1863 the regiment took part in the Battle of Secessionville, and the siege and ill-fated attack on Battery Wagner, located on Morris Island, (depicted in the Civil War film *Glory*). The regiment remained in the area through early 1864 until it was transferred to Florida, operating primarily along the St. John's River near Jacksonville. In the spring of 1864 the regiment was sent to Virginia and assigned to General Benjamin Butler's Army of the James, where it fought at Port Walthal Junction, Chester Station, Swift Creek, Fort Darling, Drewry's Bluff, on the Bermuda Hundred line, and again at Port Walthal. By mid-June it was participating in the Siege of Petersburg. During that campaign, this veteran regiment saw action at Deep Bottom Run (June-August 1864), Strawberry Plains, Chaffin's Farm, New Market Heights, and Darbytown Road.

Fig. 22. Carte de visite of Lt. Daniel Sargent. Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society
https://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=2582

During the war Sargent was promoted to 1st lieutenant and commanded Company E. On September 3, 1863 he was promoted to the rank of captain, which he declined. During the war he was wounded twice in the service of his country. During the Battle of New Berne on March 14, 1862 he was "*wounded by musket ball through the neck.*" Sargent was wounded again on August 16, 1864 at Deep Bottom Run, almost exactly two years after his first wounding. He was discharged on October 14, 1864 due to his three-year term of service having expired and he returned to Boston.

Daniel Sargent died from pneumonia on February 18, 1892, at the age of 51 years and 11 months. His Joh. Springer shotgun was passed down through the Sargent family of Boston until modern times, when it was sold by the estate of Elaine Sargent. It is not known how the gun came to America or how exactly young Lt. Sargent acquired it, but a number of examples of guns captured from the Confederacy during the North Carolina expedition are known,



Figure 23. Lt. Daniel Sargent's Joh. Springer shotgun.
Photo courtesy of Tim Prince, College Hill Arsenal.



*Figure 24. Lt. Daniel Sargent's Joh. Springer shotgun.
Photo courtesy of Tim Prince, College Hill Arsenal.*

This ornate Johann Springer 12 gauge sidelock, side by side percussion shotgun represents the pinnacle of mid-19th century European excessive pulchritude. It is covered in relief engraving with gold damascene highlights and features an ornately carved and checkered stock (Figures 23 & 24). It is 45 inches long with 28 inch long barrels and is clearly marked on both the locks and the barrel rib as the work of Johann Springer. The metal is almost completely covered with decorative gold geometric and floral designs on the hammers, locks, barrel rib, breech plug tang, butt plate tang and trigger guard. The locks, hammers, breeches and furniture are also profusely engraved with chiseled relief hunting scenes and classical motifs. The hammer necks feature winged cherubs, while the hammer noses depict lion's heads. The right lock (Figure 25) shows two dogs in search of a rabbit in its warren and is marked **Springer** under the hammer, while the left lock (Figure 26) shows two dogs in pursuit of two grouse and is marked **in Wien** under the hammer. The tails of both locks depict the face of a wizened man. The breeches feature engraved platinum blow-outs and both barrels are engraved with a pair of large musketeers with capes and large feathered hats, surrounded by gold damascene foliate decorations.



Fig. 25. Right side lock. Photo courtesy of Tim Prince, College Hill Arsenal.



Fig. 26. Left side lock. Photo courtesy of Tim Prince, College Hill Arsenal.

The rib above and between the side by side barrels is marked in Gothic script **Johann Springer in Wien**. in letters a third of an inch tall, with the entire legend being about 3 inches long. All of the lettering is highlighted with gold damascene, and a substantial amount of additional gold decoration is present (Figure 27). The barrels and rib are matted by a swirling Damascus style pattern. The top of the butt plate is engraved with a scene of a buck and doe in the forest, with more gold damascened patterns (Figure 28), and the bottom of the distinctive trigger guard is decorated with gold designs and the engraved scene of a hunter and his dog in a field. The upper tang between the hammers is relief engraved with a scene of a dog having taken down a buck. The part of the upper tang that is further to the rear has an engraved image of Apollo with his bow and quiver full of arrows. The bow, arrows and sling are all highlighted in gold. (Figure 29).



Fig. 27. Top rib with the maker's name, **Johann Springer in Wien** in gold letters. Note the gold designs on the rib and barrel. Photo courtesy of Tim Prince, College Hill Arsenal.



Fig. 28. Top of the butt plate. Photo courtesy of Tim Prince, College Hill Arsenal.



Fig. 29. Upper tang of shotgun. Photo courtesy of Tim Prince, College Hill Arsenal.

The select walnut stock has a striking grain and is embellished with a deeply carved floral design. The shotgun also has fine checkering on the wrist and bottom of the butt stock. There is also a disk embedded in the left side of the buttstock (Figure 30) that bears the inscription:

D. Sargent
Roanoke Island
Feb. 3, 1862



Fig. 30. Carved buttstock and D. Sargent disk. Photo courtesy of Tim Prince, College Hill Arsenal.

Johann Springer died in 1875 and his widow Katharina successfully ran the business for a few years while raising five children. In 1888, Springer's two sons, Rudolf and Gustav, took over the company. They had been sent to England for training where they worked for the prestigious Birmingham gunmaker Braendlin.

They also changed the company name to “**Johann Springer’s Erben**” (*Johann Springer’s Heirs*), the name by which it is known today.

The company prospered and continued to grow. The brothers established a factory in the Josefs-gasse part of Vienna. Their firearms represented the pinnacle of 19th century European luxury and Springer guns received numerous awards, including the Golden Austrian State Prize and the Monte Carlo Grand Prix Award in 1908 and they shined at the 1900 Paris Exposition. In 1911 Springer’s k.u.k. title of Purveyor to the Imperial Court of Austria was successfully renewed and Johan Springer’s Erben continued to count as its customers, the elite of Europe. A list of Springer’s customers reads like a who’s who of the royalty and nobility of Europe, including Emperor Franz Josef, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Archduchess Maria Theresia (whose assassination in Sarajevo started World War 1), Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, members of the British royal family, Russian royalty and nobility, and numerous other noble families, including Liechtenstein, Esterházy, Coburg and Orłowskis.

The end of the First World War and the collapse of the Austrian monarchy, indeed, the collapse of many European monarchies and noble houses, brought hard times to Austria and Springer. However, as time passed the company was able to rebound during the interwar period by continuing to concentrate on the high-end luxury trade. In the 1930s, Joh. Springer’s Erben was additionally appointed as the purveyor of arms to the court of Monaco. It prospered somewhat due to the sale of the famous Springer shotguns - sidelock double shotguns of exceptional quality that were sold throughout Europe. The sidelock double barrel 12 gauge shotgun pictured below (Figure 31) is representative of the Springer shotguns of that time. Made in 1926, it is embellished with English-style Arabesque engraving, presumably by the renowned master engraver Matzinger (first name not recorded), who is widely admired for his master-level foliate scrollwork and relief engravings on bespoke European firearms, particularly for Johan Springer’s Erben.



Fig. 31. Joh. Springer’s Erben sidelock shotgun made in 1926. Close-up of the Arabesque foliate engraving of Master engraver Matzinger. Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer’s Erben, Vienna, Austria.

Although Springer adopted somewhat with the times, expanding the number of different actions that they used in their guns, they still maintained their commitment to quality. Much of their clientele were traditional hunters and sportsmen who were Alpine hunters and prided themselves on needing only one shot to bring down their quarry and this single shot Pirschbuchse, or stalking rifle (Figures 32 to 36), reflects that tradition. Made prior to World War 2, this 7x64mm rifle has a Heeren falling block action

and a deeply blued 25 inch long barrel that is faceted toward the rear but transitions to round. The gun's walnut Monte Carlo style stock has a finely checkered pistol grip and fine checkering on the separate forestock, which ends in an Alpine style horn tip. (Figures 32 & 33). The action is color case hardened and is covered with full coverage intricate vignette engraving (Figures 34 & 35). This type of engraving requires immense skill to create without hard outlines to hide mistakes. The rifle has the characteristic Heeren trigger guard/lever and, unique to Heeren rifles, the Heeren double "triggers." There is also a safety on the right side of the action.



Figures 32. Springer Heeren action rifle. Photos courtesy of Morphy Auctions, Denver PA.



Figures 33. Springer Heeren action rifle. Photos courtesy of Morphy Auctions, Denver PA.

NOTE ON THE HEEREN ACTION OR SYSTEM: The Heeren system is named after its inventor, Christian Arturo Juan Antonio Heeren y Massa, who was born in Hamburg in 1844. He registered several patents in Europe involving shipbuilding, streetcar tracks and railroads. He also registered patents for his falling block action in 1880 -1881. After the patents expired, various European custom gunmakers, including Joh. Springer's Erben, produced guns with the Heeren system. More popular in Europe than the United States, Heeren system rifles have never been a mass-produced item, but have always remained something special. They were usually meant as short, light stalking rifles for Alpine mountain use on roe, chamois and red deer. A striking characteristic feature of every Heeren rifle is the uniquely shaped trigger guard unit with the double "trigger." The strongly bulging, slightly pretzel-shaped trigger guard also serves as a lever to open and close the action. To unlock the action there is a small lever inside the trigger guard, and when this is pushed forward it unlocks the trigger guard which pivots downward to lower the breechblock and exposing the chamber for loading. Pushing the rear trigger forward immediately before firing cocks the weapon. According to one source, it is estimated that not more than 200 of the original Heeren System action were produced prior to the First World War with most being presented to nobility and royalty throughout Europe. **END NOTE.**

The rifle has a raised engraved matted rail (or rib) above the barrel with claw scope mounts. It has a notched rear sight and a ramped front sight. The rail is engraved with the maker's name and address, "**JOH. SPRINGER's ERBEN, GEWEHRFABRIKANTEN, WIEN**" (Figure 36).



Fig. 34. Springer Heeren action rifle. Photo courtesy Morphy Auctions, Denver, PA.



Fig. 35. Enlargement of the color case hardened action, intricate engraving, safety lever, and Heeren trigger guard / lever and Heeren "triggers." Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions, Denver, PA.



Fig. 36. Top rail with maker's name and address. Photo courtesy of Morphy Auctions, Denver, PA.

During the Second World War, the company was a supplier to the German army and among its products were parts for V2 rockets. After the war, the company by and large stopped manufacturing arms. Gustav Springer died in 1944 and Johann Paul Springer, Gustav's nephew, became the new principal of the firm. His challenge was to rebuild the company and as part of his plan Springer briefly resumed the manufacture of high-end hunting guns in 1955. Unfortunately, despite attracting a few famous customers, debts mounted and firearms production ceased in December 1956. In 1958 the family villa and the factory were sold.



Although it was no longer a manufacturer, Springer continued to repair its arms and did business as a retailer of other's hunting weapons and supplies. However, occasionally one sees guns on the market that were supposedly made when, according to the Springer's website history, Springer's officially wasn't producing guns.

One such is a magnificent side by side, double barrel 12 gauge shotgun. According to a Joh. Springer's Erben auction catalogue this shotgun was made in 1949, when Springer's supposedly was not in the gun making business. This exquisite shotgun has 28.4 inch long chopper lump barrels with an engine turned rib, bar-action sidelocks with intercepting sears, double triggers with an articulated front trigger, and automatic sliding safety on the tang. What really elevates this custom shotgun is the finely detailed arabesque scroll foliate engraving that covers much of the metal. Hidden within the scroll engraving are engraved griffins and OTHER beasts' heads that are spewing forth tendrils (Figured 37 to 39).

Fig. 37 (LEFT). Note the intricate engraving that covers the bottom of the shotgun's action. The inscription reads:

**.JOH.
SPRINGER'S ERBEN
GEWEHRFABRIKANTEN
WIEN**

Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria.



Fig. 38 ABOVE. Right (top) and left (bottom) side plates of action of double barrel shotgun dated to 1949. Note the fine arabesque foliate engraving with an engraved griffin hidden in the branches and leaves.

Fig. 39 LEFT. Close of sideplate engraving with griffin emerging from the arabesque foliate.

In 1963 Margarethe Springer, daughter of another Gustav, took over the company. She successfully managed it for the next 45 years and oversaw the re-establishment of the company in the post-war period. Christian Johann Springer took over the management of the company from his mother Margarethe in April 2008.

Springer has also returned to producing high-end custom hunting guns under the JSE label. According to Springer's website, the company currently makes custom side-by-side shotguns with Holland & Holland sidelocks (Figures 40 & 41) and limited edition custom bolt action rifles based on the Mauser 98 action (Figures 42 & 43). They use either standard Mauser actions or "Magnum Single" or "Double Square Bridge" actions. These bespoke rifles use Lothar-Walther match barrels and delivery time is usually a year for a plain gun without engraving. A custom engraved gun naturally takes longer and costs more.



Figures 40 & 41. Joh. Springer's Erben custom JSE 12 gauge shotgun with Holland & Holland sidelocks. Price is \$39,412 (34,000 Euros). Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria.



Figures 42 & 43. Joh. Springer's Erben custom JSE bolt action rifle in .338 Lapua Magnum. Mauser 98 action. Price is \$44,048, (38,000 Euros). Photo courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria.

Today, Joh. Springer's Erben is one of Europe's premier sporting and hunting arms retailers. The firm sells hunting rifles and shotguns, hunting equipment and clothing as well as exclusive fashion lines at its three Vienna locations. When I was travelling to Vienna for business I would make it a habit to stop in at Springer's flagship store at Weihburggasse 27 in the heart of Vienna (Figure 44) behind the Marriot Hotel. This store is a true hunters, shooters, and collectors' paradise with three floors of hunting equipment, clothing and firearms of all kinds. Guns bearing names such as Purdey, Holland and Holland, and Boss from the United Kingdom, FAMARS, Perugini & Visini, and Perazzi from Italy, and Josef Just and Johan Fanzoj from Ferlach, Austria are common. In addition, Joh. Springer's Erben is one of Europe's largest and most respected auction houses specializing in antique and modern weapons, weapon accessories, and collectors' items,



Joh. Springer's Erben also offers shooting and safety training in one of Austria's most modern shooting facilities. At Springer's historic Josefgasse location, training is conducted for Austrian gun licenses, as well as defensive courses with handguns or hunting classes with long arms. Springer has a gunsmithing workshop there where Springer rifles and shotguns can be ordered, and where the maintenance, repair and restoration of a large variety of weapons is conducted.

One of Springer's business enterprises is providing custom tailored hunting trips for the discriminating hunter. According to Springer's website, they arrange hunting trips in Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, Spain, and Africa,

*Fig. 44. Front of Joh. Springer's Erben flagship store in Vienna at Weihburggasse 27.
Photo Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria.*

NOTE: The author thanks Tim Prince of College Hill Arsenal for his superb research and erudite write-up about the life and Civil War service of Lt. Daniel Sargent, 24th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment. **End Note.**